



Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
Helene Nelson, Department Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent



Governor Jim Doyle

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, DPI Communications Officer
(608) 266-3559 / joseph.donovan@dpi.state.wi.us

Stephanie Marquis, DFHS Communications Director
(608) 266-1683 / marquis@dhfs.state.wi.us

Wisconsin schools join Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

MADISON—Students crunching on carrots or cauliflower or whipping up a fruit smoothie while learning the importance of eating fresh produce will be the scene in 25 schools throughout the state thanks to a federal grant that brings Wisconsin into the successful U.S. Department of Agriculture's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Wisconsin is one of six states receiving grants to join the program this year. Schools will use their grants to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and serve them to all students. Typically, schools serve the fruits and vegetables to children in their classrooms and balance the snack with a classroom activity like silent reading or nutrition education. Other schools in the program have used hallway kiosks, free vending machines, tables or baskets in the nurse's or school office, or other locations to distribute the fresh produce. They have paired the fresh fruits and vegetables with student club meetings, bus rides, field trips, or other activities to reach all students.

"The special aspect of this grant is that it allows us to offer more fresh produce to all students as a supplement to the school breakfast and school lunch programs," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "Many schools will offer the fresh fruits and vegetables at times during the day when children would otherwise be hungry or might need an energy boost to improve their attention in the classroom. We know that hungry children can't learn, so this program supports our efforts to boost achievement for all students and close the achievement gap."

"We hope this program will have a lifelong impact on students," said Helene Nelson, secretary of the Department of Health and Family Services. "Eating right and exercising are key to staying healthy. Teaching kids good nutrition now—and showing them how good fruits and veggies taste—will be a lesson that will stay with them all their lives."

"Whether students are from urban areas or rural communities, having access to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as the effect they have on overall nutrition, will serve as a boost to learning and lifelong

(more)

health,” said U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore. “Approximately 13,500 school children in low-income areas of Wisconsin will be the direct beneficiaries of this wonderful USDA program now active in 14 states.”

The Wisconsin grant partners include the departments of Public Instruction and Health and Family Services, the University of Wisconsin campuses in Eau Claire, Madison, and Stout, the UW Cooperative Extension, and the Wisconsin Home Grown Lunch Program. The DPI is responsible for overall implementation and administration of the program. DHFS has primary oversight for evaluation with support from the university partners. DHFS and the UW Cooperative Extension will identify, select, and distribute nutrition education resources, which will include providing “5 A Day” promotional materials to participating schools. The Wisconsin Home Grown Lunch Program also will be involved in program evaluation and will coordinate between participating schools and Wisconsin fruit and vegetable growers for procurement of locally grown produce.

Evaluations will include a pre-measure conducted this February to determine students’ fresh fruit and vegetable consumption and mid-point evaluations in May and next February to measure increases in students’ knowledge of nutrition and consumption of fresh produce. Food service directors will be surveyed on barriers and success of the program. The goal is to demonstrate that the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program works in Wisconsin and contribute to national data supporting continued and permanent funding for the program.

Piloted in 2002 in an effort to combat childhood obesity by helping children learn more healthful eating habits, the \$6 million expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program allows Wisconsin, Connecticut, Idaho, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah to offer fresh produce to all students in 25 schools in each state. The program now reaches 14 states and three Indian Tribal Organizations. Wisconsin’s \$1 million grant started the end of January and will run through June 30, 2007.

Funding is targeted to schools with a higher incidence of students from economically disadvantaged families, thus the fresh produce students see at schools in the program might be their first exposure to fresh fruits and vegetables and the only ones they will see all day. Participating schools must offer the fresh fruits and vegetables free of charge to all students and the fresh produce cannot be used to replace fruit or vegetable servings in the national school breakfast or lunch programs. The program has the potential to reach approximately 13,500 students.

“The partners in this program will be working to increase children’s fruit and vegetable consumption, their awareness of fruits and vegetables, and their willingness to try new fruits and vegetables, including some produced locally by Wisconsin farmers,” said Burmaster. “Additionally, we will be working to create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, evaluating the effectiveness of the program, and working to secure more permanent future funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in Wisconsin and the nation.”

###

NOTE: A list of Wisconsin schools participating in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the amount of their grant allocations follows.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Wisconsin Participants

Abbotsford Elementary School, Abbotsford School District — \$ 23,896

Bluff View Intermediate School, Prairie du Chien School District — \$ 33,318

Butte de Morts Elementary School, Menasha School District — \$ 27,288

Edward Bain School of Language and Art, Kenosha School District — \$ 58,797

Glidden K-12 School, Glidden School District — \$ 16,508

Howe Elementary School, Green Bay Area School District — \$ 35,580

Ladysmith Elementary School, Ladysmith-Hawkins School District — \$ 26,308

Lakeview Elementary School, South Milwaukee School District — \$ 22,689

Logan Middle School, La Crosse School District — \$ 40,027

Marinette Middle School, Marinette School District — \$ 61,209

Mead Elementary School, Wisconsin Rapids School District — \$ 35,278

Milwaukee Public Schools

Forest Home Elementary School — \$ 61,133

Kosciusko Middle School — \$ 34,976

North High School, Eau Claire Area School District — \$ 132,368

Northern Lights Elementary School, Superior School District — \$ 48,168

Parkside Middle School, Wautoma Area School District — \$ 38,067

Rock Elementary School, Hudson School District — \$ 45,304

Salem Elementary School, Salem School District — \$ 84,351

Sherman Middle School, Madison Metropolitan School District — \$ 40,555

Turtle Creek Elementary School, Delevan-Darien School District — \$ 41,836

Viroqua Middle School, Viroqua Area School District — \$ 18,091

City of Wausau

GD Jones Elementary School, Wausau School District — \$ 18,468

Newman Catholic School, Wausau — \$ 15,679

Webster Stanley Elementary School, Oshkosh Area School District — \$ 33,469

Wilson Elementary School, Janesville School District — \$ 23,745